TALENT MANAGEMENT: BRIDGING THE GAP

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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2015

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*
12-06-2015	Master's Thesis	AUG 2014 – JUN 2015

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Talent Management: Bridging the Gap	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
MAJ Joshua A. Long	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301	

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
Talent Management (TM) is an important topic among senior Army leaders as the force adjusts to post-Iraq and Afghanistan operations. TM begins with the identification of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) within the officer corps. Successful TM places officers in positions to leverage these KSAOs for the benefit of the Army and the officer. The ability to access, develop, employ, and retain the most talented officers in a fiscally-constrained environment is critical to the success of the Army. This thesis will look at challenges to implementing successful TM through a Requirements-Gaps-Solutions framework. The Requirements Section highlights Army senior leader guidance and institutional definitions for TM. The Gaps Section examines the distance between TM goals and current systems executing human resources (HR) in the Army. The primary gaps identified are definitive officer advancement requirements, the existing evaluation system, and officer management across multiple career fields, and the implications of the "up-or-out" career model. The Solutions Section proposes opportunities to bridge identified gaps and create a holistic talent management system where goals are supported by action. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to explore the implementation of a full-realized TM system and its implications for the future of the Army.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Talent; Talent Management; Promotion; Skills; Requirements; Gaps; Solutions; Abilities; Knowledge

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. PHONE NUMBER *(include area code)*
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	70	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

TALENT MANAGEMENT: BRIDGING THE GAP, by Major Joshua A. Long, 70 pages.

Talent Management (TM) is an important topic among senior Army leaders as the force adjusts to post-Iraq and Afghanistan operations. TM begins with the identification of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) within the officer corps. Successful TM places officers in positions to leverage these KSAOs for the benefit of the Army and the officer. The ability to access, develop, employ, and retain the most talented officers in a fiscally-constrained environment is critical to the success of the Army. This thesis will look at challenges to implementing successful TM through a Requirements-Gaps-Solutions framework. The Requirements Section highlights Army senior leader guidance and institutional definitions for TM. The Gaps Section examines the distance between TM goals and current systems executing human resources (HR) in the Army. The primary gaps identified are definitive officer advancement requirements, the existing evaluation system, and officer management across multiple career fields, and the implications of the "up-or-out" career model. The Solutions Section proposes opportunities to bridge identified gaps and create a holistic talent management system where goals are supported by action. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to explore the implementation of a full-realized TM system and its implications for the future of the Army.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is the culmination of a three-year journey that began in Hawaii and carried across assignments, states, rank, and the birth of a child. To say this journey has been enlightening would be entirely understated. The best part about studying this topic is the opportunity moving forward to provide growth and development of future leaders. That is, in my humble opinion, the essence of being a leader–ensuring that junior leaders are developed to be better than the current generation.

I would like to first thank my committee for their guidance, support, advice, and tough love over the course of this process. COL Croft, LTC Williams, and LTC Casey–your wisdom and input made this possible, thank you. The multitude of interactions between peers, junior leaders, and senior leaders shaped the desire to conduct this study. There are too many individuals to name, but for those who have been my senior leaders, my peers and friends, and most importantly the junior leaders and NCOs, your assistance and eternal commitment to this great nation made this possible.

Finally, and without a doubt the most important. My wife and children. To my children, Cooper and Colton, you are the greatest gift I could have ever imagined. Daddy's done with his homework and now we can go to the park–I promise. Heather, your unfathomable support, love, and insight make me a better person and officer. You are the rock that I lean on. Any success that I attain is because of you. Thank you for everything you do, and everything you are. I love you.

The task of leaders is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there–let's begin this journey through talent management and use it to take tomorrow's force to new heights.

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ACRONYMS

ALDS	Army Leader Development Strategy
AOHCM	Army Officer Human Capital Model
CAC	Combined Arms Center
CCC	Captains Career Course
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
COL	Colonel
CPT	Captain
CSA	Chief of Staff of the Army
CTC	Combined Training Center
EFMP	Exceptional Family Member Program
FA	Functional Area
GA	General of the Army
GEN	General
HCM	Human Capital Model
HCS	Human Capital Strategy
HCT	Human Capital Theory
HDWP	Human Dimension White Paper
HR	Human Resources
HRC	Human Resources Command
KD	Key Developmental
KSAO	Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, Other Characteristics
LOE	Line of Effort
LT	Lieutenant

LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
MAJ	Major
OBC	Officer Basic Course
OCS	Officer Candidate School
OEMA	Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis
OER	Officer Evaluation Report
OPMS	Officer Personnel Management System
ORB	Officer Record Brief
PME	Professional Military Education
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
TM	Talent Management

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Talent is the multiplier. The more energy and attention you invest in it, the greater
the yield.

— Marcus Buckingham

General of the Army (GA) Dwight D. Eisenhower is widely regarded as a superb

strategist and his leadership during World War II is often times directly linked to the

Allies' victory in Europe. The skills he possessed to navigate the military and political

worlds of a war-torn Europe were paralleled by only a select few individuals. Without

World War II, there is a high probability that the world would have never known the

genius of GA Eisenhower. Fluctuating between company and field grade ranks from

1919-1939, Eisenhower heavily contemplated retirement since his skills as a planner had

limited him to a career path with few promotion possibilities. With the start of WWII, the

focus of the Army changed and leadership sought out the most talented planners.

Eisenhower quickly ascended the ranks, going from lieutenant colonel to brigadier

general in less than a year. Less than eighteen months after pinning on his first star,

Dwight Eisenhower was a five-star general and in charge of Allied Forces in Europe.[1]

The progression of GA Dwight Eisenhower from near retirement as a lieutenant

colonel to Allied Forces Commander signifies the importance of the concept of "the right

officer in the right place at the right time." The argument can be made that never in the

Army's history has talent management been more crucial than in the case of

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[1] Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Co.,
2002).

Eisenhower's career progression.[2] Throughout the Army's history, leadership has sought out the "best and brightest" to lead the next generation of America's soldiers. In Eisenhower's day, GA Marshall lamented that Army officer career management systems were insufficient. In fact, he declared they were an obstacle to true talent management.[3] Since WWII, many senior Army leaders have voiced the same concern. The challenge for the Army is to create and sustain a system that identifies these qualities early in an officer's career and cultivate them for the future.

This thesis analyzes the Army's current use of talent management (TM) processes, highlights their positive and negative effect on the officer corps, and explores options that may improve institutional, organizational, and individual outcomes. TM is an umbrella term that covers multiple facets of an officer's career lifecycle including accession, assignment, development, and retention. By studying the point in time where TM needs to begin, and adjusting the career timeline to support that point, the resulting yields from TM could provide a more effective officer corps and subsequently more effective leaders. Senior Army leaders view TM as important because retaining officers with diverse skill sets is critical to shaping the future force to win in a complex world.

Unfortunately, TM is largely undefined. It is composed largely of a compilation of traits, characteristics, or descriptions that leaders use to express the desire for the highest quality officers. Westpoint's Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA) defines talent management as "systematic planning for the right number and

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[2] Ibid., 14.

[3] Arthur T. Coumbe, "Army Officer Development: Historical Context" (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, April 2010).

type of people to meet the Army's needs at all levels and at all times so that the majority

of them are employed optimally. It integrates accessions, retention, development and

employment strategies. Talent management begins with entry-level employees and aligns

their talents against the demand for them during their entire careers, to include positions

at the very top of the Army."[4] This broad definition sounds more like a goal or vision of

TM instead of a definition. The Army defines other key terms such as "talent" but has not

fully realized the mechanisms necessary to evaluate this talent nor measure its level

across multiple dimensions.

Beginning with accessions, senior Army leaders express TM requirements with

words like "multi-skilled" or "adaptive";[5] however the officer corps does not have testing

mechanisms nor has the Army adapted its HR systems to measure a base-line level of

these requirements. The Army uses words such as "diverse, flexible, intelligent, and

adaptable" yet the current HR system provides little definitions and few mechanisms to

access and evaluate. This problem continues throughout development, retention, and

assignment phases of the career lifecycle. This creates confusion for both commanders

and subordinates as TM is defined inconsistently throughout an officer's career. Until HR

systems measures these traits, Army TM will remain tied to an industrial-era process of

treating all officers and positions as interchangeable cogs within a machine.

In addition to lacking TM definitions and HR systems, the Army's evaluation

system for officers has not substantially changed in decades. The existing evaluation

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[4] U.S. Talent Management, "Homepage," accessed 15 December 2014, http://talent.army.mil/index.php/home.

[5] Department of the Army, Army Regulation 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2006), 2-1.

system provides a snapshot of how a rated officer has executed his/her duties and allows leaders to provide recommendations for potential. The Officer Evaluation Report (OER) focuses on performance (Rater) and potential (Senior Rater) but is lacking when it comes to assessing an officer's talent and how the Army should manage it. The measures recorded on the OER focus on Army Values, physical fitness, and character traits to determine strengths and weaknesses; however, TM requirements such as "multi-skilled, flexible, or adaptable" are not reflected on the report. Compounding this issue, a leader's subjective interpretations and recommendations may fluctuate inconsistently since the OER reflects limited TM assessment criteria. Failure to bring TM into the OER system in a decisive manner creates gaps as the two systems never fully intersect to shape the force. It also highlights the implications of using one OER to assess officers across multiple career fields.

The use of one type of evaluation form to capture the variegated attributes and competencies of officers in multiple career fields also poses a challenge to fully realizing the potential of TM. Officers belong in two broad career fields, Basic Branches, and Functional Areas (FA). Basic Branches consist of the 17 branches within the Army that comprise the preponderance of the force. These branches include Infantry, Armor, Engineer, Aviation, and others.[6] Officers are commissioned into the basic branches initially and this is where the majority serve for the entirety of their career. Each branch follows a different path to what that branch deems success. For the majority of combat arms and combat arms support, a typical career path flows from Platoon Leader to

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[6] Department of the Army, Human Resources Command, "Officer," accessed 15 December 2014, http://hrc.army.mil.

Company Commander to Operations Officer/Execute Officer to Battalion Commander.

The two largest career fields are Combat Arms and Combat Arms Support specialties.

These consist of Infantry, Armor, Aviation, Engineers, Field Artillery, and other branches

where the primary focus is combat oriented. When compared to force sustainment

branches, career paths broadly diverge. Force Sustainment branches consist of Adjutant

General, Finance, Judge Advocate, and other branches where the main purpose is to

support and sustain the combat arms branches. Force Sustainment branches start out the

same with the Platoon Leader position then transition into specialized staff positions.

Command opportunities are limited due to the functions of each respective branch;

therefore, the career paths for combat arms officers and force sustainment officers

progress in different directions.

There is a second major set of officers in specialized functional areas (FA). An

FA is a grouping of officers by a career field other than an arm, service or branch

possessing an interrelated grouping of tasks and skills that may require significant

education, training and experience.[7] FA officers follow a separate path. There are

currently 14 FA's in the Army, each with its own education, training, and promotion

requirements.[8] FA officers hold positions on senior staffs and do not typically command

formations like officers in basic branches. The evaluation system though, makes no

distinction between the two groups. Officers with two different requirements for success

are evaluated with the same report. TM practices run counter to the current evaluation

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

system. TM focuses on individual talents to better the Army.[9] The forcing of all branches to follow the same evaluation processes for success reduces the ability to effectively use TM by placing all officers into a one-size-fits-all box.

The final gap facing the realization of TM in the Army is the "up-or-out" promotion system. Officers that fail to meet the requirements within the evaluation system are not promoted and eventually separated from the Army. Officers are not provided the option to voluntarily remain at the same rank. This creates a system that produces "generalist" officers–they are jacks-of-all-trades, masters of none. This is significant because TM principles call for specialization in order to maximize talents, but the up-or-out system prevents that technique. There are military education requirements that an officer must meet for success for each grade. The up-or-out system potentially limits TM opportunities due to an inflexible progression timeline. TM best practices suggest that promotion and progression are tied to skills and talents, not a timeline; therefore, the Army's inflexible progression model potentially prevents it from gaining the benefits of TM.

Given these gaps, this study explores how the Army can better manage the skills and talents of the officer corps to affect the future force. The vignette of Eisenhower's career path shows that effective TM is absolutely critical. The ability to recognize shortfalls in the current HR system and adapt to achieve effective TM is crucial in an environment where the Army is expected to do more with less. Senior leaders have given guidance, now the Army's mechanisms for TM have to adapt to provide the output. The

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[9] Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2013), 3.

intent of this study is to provide suggestions to close the gaps between this guidance and the execution of TM across the officer corps.

Research Questions

Primary research question: Based on stated TM requirements, what are the gaps in the Army's execution of TM?

Secondary research questions focus in three areas:

Focus Area 1–Requirements. What are the Army's definitions, objectives, and requirements as stated by Army senior leaders and in published Army Documents (AR's, DA Pam's, Doctrine, etc.)?

Focus Area 2–Gaps. What are the gaps between requirements and action in the current HR system?

Focus Area 3–Solutions. What opportunities are available to influence change in Army TM practice?

Assumptions

1. The current evaluation system will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

2. Army senior leaders will continue to put a premium on talent management.

3. Changes recommended by the outcome of this study will take additional time and in-depth analysis to affect change; therefore, this will not impact officers in the near-term.

4. The Army will continue as an All-Volunteer Force.

Limitations

Access to quantitative data

Scope and Delimitations

TM is a broad topic so it is necessary to scope this study with a focus on TM theory and practices as they apply to the Army. This study will outline requirements, identify gaps, and suggest potential solutions to realize the benefits of TM.

Significance of Study

This study looks to address the effectiveness of the current Army HR systems for managing the officer corps and whether these systems provide the outcomes expected by Army senior leaders. Identifying and cultivating individuals in the current environment is critical to ensuring success for tomorrow's force. Molding tomorrow's leaders is a responsibility for leaders of today. The results of this study can benefit leaders as they work to develop their officers for the future. By analyzing the current TM systems and providing recommendations for improvement, the effectiveness of future TM systems increases. This study hopes to provide relevant TM analysis by approaching the problem from a systems-based approach.

This study will be laid out within the following framework: Requirements, Gaps, and Solutions. This chapter provides an introduction. Chapter 2 reviews past studies and literature of the TM field, identifying requirements. Chapter 3 outlines a research methodology. Chapter 4 analyzes current gaps within Army HR systems. Chapter 5 provides recommendations for gaps identified during this study and summarizes the outcome of research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.
— James A. Baldwin

Army leaders debate the merits, requirements, and definitions of Talent

Management (TM) as they develop the structure for tomorrow's force. The Army has

continually adapted to meet the demands placed upon it, yet senior leaders continue to

discuss TM application. Over the past century, the evolution of military schools and

training for officers is evidence of the desire to better the officer corps and ensure that

leaders are prepared for future conflict.[10] Looking back through the Army's history, the

intensity of applying TM principles has varied but nevertheless, the desire to realize the

benefits of TM have remained constant.

Recently, senior Army leaders have directed the Army to study how TM can

better the officer corps. The *Army Leader Development Strategy* (ALDS) highlights this

emphasis with the goal of "right officer, right skills, right place, and right time."

Acknowledging that diversity within an organization limits each officer's assignment

according to their skill set at the right time, ALDS envisions effectively placing officers

as the end state. With this goal in mind, this chapter will look first at the historical

context of TM and how that has changed over time, specifically in drawdown periods

similar to today's environment. Next, the chapter will outline the current efforts placed

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[10] Arthur T. Coumbe, "Army Officer Development: Historical Context" (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, April 2010), 13.

toward TM and compare how today's rhetoric differs from action. Additionally, private enterprise has studied TM extensively in an effort to improve their business condition; therefore, the chapter will explore how these lessons can be applied to the Army. Finally, this chapter will focus on developing an understanding of how TM has evolved from Post-World War I to today and how the requirements stated by today's leaders face gaps that limit TM effectiveness.

<u>History of Talent Management</u>

Officer development has changed over history-most drastically following major conflict. The lessons learned from major conflict allowed the Army to see deficiencies and implement new systems to close capability gaps. The modern officer developmental model came about from 1899-1904 under the supervision of Elihu Root, the Secretary of War.[11] He developed a formula for officer development consisting of rotational duty assignments with periods of professional schooling. These reforms led to a revision of the Army school network.[12] The resulting "Branch Schools" overhauled their curriculum extensively to meet the changing requirements ending with 19 branch schools and the foundation for today's junior officer education. Additionally, the reforms created the re-emergence of the "School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry" as the new "General Service and Staff School," known today as "Command and General Staff College." The intent of creating these educational centers hinged on the outcome of the Spanish-

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[11] Ibid., 2.

[12] Ibid., 3-4.

American War and was intended on preparing leaders to perform at the operational-level should another conflict arise.

The military education system again reformed after World War I, focusing on how to prepare the Army to meet the demands of modern industrialized warfare.[13] The Army focused on building an officer corps capable of leading a citizen army in the event of national emergency. While West Point was the singular point of commission until 1935, the Thomason Act of 1935 allowed 1,000 Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) officers to serve one year of active duty and 50 officers to receive active duty commissions.[14] The number of applicants outnumbered the available positions so much that screening criteria was exceptionally high. This provided the Army with the opportunity to select only the most qualified candidates and resulted in a high level of talent uptake. Screening and selection boards used explicit criteria which covered broad academic topics. Despite the ability to select highly qualified officers, the post-World War I education systems narrowly focused subject matter on military affairs at the tactical-level. Schooling emphasized command and staff preparation and training not educating officers on political and economic aspects of military strategy.[15] During the inter-war period the officer career path closely resembled the current model, depicted in figure 1.

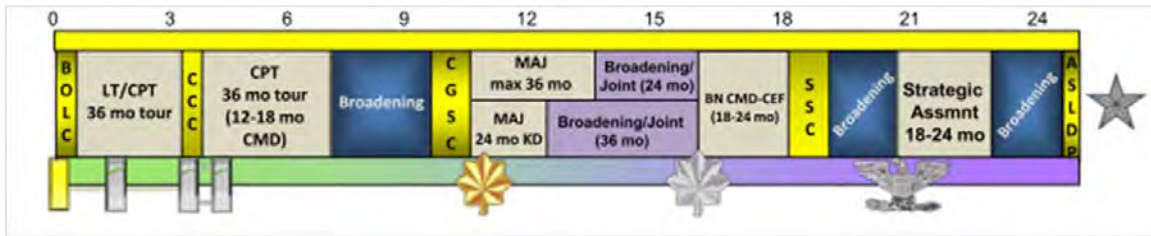[13] Ibid., 4.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 5.

Figure 1. Career Timeline

Source: Engineer Branch, "Branch Brief," accessed 2 May 2015, www.hrc.army.mil.

The assignment process during the inter-war period was constrained by various policy requirements, officer availability, budget, and legislative restrictions. One policy restriction was called "equity of duty."[16] This restriction was extended to both individuals and units and in general served to try to spread talent across the force. Officers that served in "good assignments"–those in favorable locations - typically were not allowed to get consecutive "good assignments" and everyone was to get an opportunity to serve in a "good assignment." This policy severely restricted TM opportunities by forcing officers to transition from location to location without considering skill-sets. The philosophy behind equity of duty is that it prevents "pigeon-holing" officers into one job. This provided officers a breadth of experience they could use as they progressed. The downside is that equity of duty prevented development of expert knowledge within an organization. Additionally, it provided the potential for nepotism as those officers not favored were pushed to the fringe of the organization. Equity of duty became the method for balancing two schools of thought while maximizing opportunity. The same sentiment remains today as senior leader's guidance is for "well-rounded" or "diversified" officers

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[16] Coumbe, 5.

serving in multiple capacities and various locales.[17] Thus creating generalists or "jacks-of-all-trades, master of none" officers capable of plugging into a variety of assignments.

After World War II, senior leaders recognized the requirement to spread officers with deep talents across multiple fields. The Army needed diplomats, scientists, economists, and mathematicians, as well as, combat leaders.[18] This was the beginning of what is known today as Functional Areas (FA). During World War II, the Army relaxed officer accessions to meet the demand of leading an Army that grew to over 8 million soldiers. West Point was no longer the largest source of officer accessions with the rise of the Officer Candidate School (OCS) program to rapidly provide officers for the larger Army. Accessions criteria adjusted to allow more flexibility and generally lowered standards across the officer corps in regards to intellect, talent, and quality. To accommodate these new requirements, the Army published new manning guidance in 1948 to employ officers where their abilities best met the Army's mission. The guidance created functional areas to meet these specialized demands. Here the Army shifted from an officer corps of "generalists" to two distinct groups, basic branches and functional areas. Career progression continued to follow typical paths and conflicting guidance complicated the understanding of TM in the 1950s. DA Pamphlet 600-3, *Career Planning for Officers,* noted that:

> The military specialist of greatest value to the Army is primarily qualified in his basic branch and secondarily qualified in one of the specialist career fields. The

[17] General Raymond Odierno, *Army Manning Guidance* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012).

[18] John W. Masland and Laurence I. Radway, *Soldiers and Scholars: Military Education and National Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 20.

officer. . . failing to remain qualified in his basic branch is usually of limited potential as a future senior army commander.[19]

This guidance led to confusion amongst the officer corps as the statements reflected changing the system, but the assignments process continued to follow past methods. Commanders continued to demand experienced and specialized officers, units failed to sacrifice effectiveness in lieu of TM, and assignment "fairness" continued to restrict TM practices. A new policy of "equity of treatment" introduced the idea that officers must serve the same number of years in each grade, and experience generally the same career path.[20] This policy restricted TM by forcing officers into the same path, evolving into the up-or-out system of today. Simultaneously, most officers shunned their FA in order to get promoted. The Army recognized the need for change, but implementing change did not occur during the 1950s.

The 1960s marked a shift in TM practice with the appointment of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Secretary McNamara placed an increased demand on expert knowledge and specialized experience for senior leaders. A growing rift between senior military officials and civilian elected officials reflected a sense that the officer career and assignment model required change. A high attrition rate among officers led many civilian officials to believe that Army TM practices were defunct and needed to provide more emphasis on aligning skills, education and experience with positions.[21] The Vietnam

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[19] Department of the Army, Department of the Army (DA) Pamplet 600-3, *Career Planning for Army Officers* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1956), 7.

[20] Coumbe, 5.

[21] Robert H. Nevins, Jr., "The Retention of Quality Junior Officers—A Challenge for the Seventies" (Thesis, US Army War College, Carlisle PA, March 1970), 42.

War, and its increased officer through-put requirement increased attrition. Priority shifted to quantity with quality as a secondary priority. Similar to World War II, the quantity focus led to lowering standards in the officer corps. Coupled with the increase in tasks and functions, the Army was not capable of filling the specialized roles required of its expanded mission. The historical career model did not develop senior leaders to operate in non-operational roles. Despite the recognition of these shortcomings, little was done to affect change. The traditional career progression model remained intact. The "fairness" policies continued to restrict TM by forcing officers and units to rotate through assignments without developing deep experience and knowledge. Availability restricted TM as the promotion system continued to force officers to serve time-in-grade requirements. The Vietnam War created issues as officers rotated on yearly time schedules and HR systems did not allow them to remain in country where the skills they developed could be put to use.[22] Ill-defined methods to capture assignment requirements and officers skills put additional restrictions on TM during this period. The Army had no mechanism to identify specialized traits and skills; therefore, leading to officers being improperly assigned across the force. Holistically, there was no method to put the right officer in the right position, as Secretary McNamara demanded, resulting in little change in TM practices.

The 1970s and 1980s saw the rise of the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) as the answer to officer career management practices. The idea behind OPMS was to match skills, aptitudes, and experience of officers with appropriate duty

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[22] Ibid., 9.

positions.[23] Senior leaders expressed concern with the system noting that it could fragment the officer corps.[24] The implementation of OPMS did little to affect TM change. The career progression model remained largely intact, the restrictions from previous years held true–fairness and equity among them. Distribution of officers continued to rely on ill-defined mechanisms to categorize requirements and skills. TM never truly changed as the Army transitioned from the industrial age to the information age, bringing past issues into current TM practice.

<u>Current Talent Management Theory</u>

Army TM initiatives are captured primarily in the *Human Dimension Approach*, the *Human Dimension White Paper (HDWP)*, and the *Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS).* The Army prides itself on developing leaders for the Nation. Career-long development is a deliberate, continuous, and progressive process.[25] Stated in the *ALDS*, leader development is achieved through the career-long synthesis of the training, education, and experiences acquired through opportunities in the institutional, operational, and self-development domains, supported by peer and developmental relationships.[26] The Army identifies that TM parallels leader development. Leader development is the over-arching theme and TM is the framework that supports. Closely mirroring elements of the *HDWP*, *ALDS* identifies structural changes in the application of

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[23] Ibid., 8.

[24] Ibid., 14.

[25] Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy*, 3.

[26] Ibid.

talent across the breadth of a career to include broadening opportunities, advanced civil

schooling, key operational billets, and professional military education. Additionally,

ALDS proposes altering the career progression model to diversify career paths to better

match the talents required by the Army's mission. TM supports leaders mastering the

fundamentals in a system that capitalizes on their skill-sets.

ALDS decomposes TM and leader development into an ends, ways, means

construct with near and mid-term objectives. The near-term objectives focus on providing

leaders with experience, enhancing broadening opportunities, and reinforcing the Army

Profession in the 21st Century.[27] The objective of providing experience hones this

foundation by offering leaders opportunities as platoon leaders, junior staff members, and

professional military education. Broadening opportunities allow individuals to develop

cognitive skills and diversify their knowledge base. Broadening assignments enhance

critical thinking skills and expose leaders to complex situations that develop their

innovative skills. Development of Army professionals is rooted in the near-term as it

provides the basis for decision-making and ethical behavior.

The Army defines TM and leader development in *ALDS* as a process aligning

training, education, and experience.[28] The ends clearly define the need for leaders capable

of thinking and operating across joint, interagency, inter-organization, and multinational

constructs. The Leadership Requirements Model, seen in Figure 2, provides a framework

that aligns development activities and practices to a set of characteristics common

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[27] Ibid., 5.

[28] Ibid., 6.

throughout the Army.[29] In this framework, the attributes tie to "be" and "know" where the competencies tie to "do." This provides the organization with specific criteria to manage talent and develop leaders.

ATTRIBUTES (Be and Know)

CHARACTER	PRESENCE	INTELLECT
* Army Values	* Military and Professional Bearing	* Mental agility
* Empathy	* Fitness	* Sound judgment
* Warrior/ Service Ethos	* Confidence	* Innovation
* Discipline	* Resilience	* Interpersonal tact
		* Expertise

LEADS	DEVELOPS	ACHIEVES
* Leads others	* Creates a positive environment/ Fosters esprit de corps	* Gets results
* Builds Trust	* Prepares self	
* Extends influence beyond the chain of command	* Develops others	
* Leads by example	* Stewards the profession	
* Communicates		

COMPETENCIES (Do)

Leadership Requirements Model, ADP 6-22, Aug 12

Figure 2.   Leader Requirements Model

Source: Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 7.

The ways of the ALDS construct consist of the processes and programs available to develop leaders and assist with TM. The intent of the ways is to continually develop leaders and manage talent across every command echelon ensuring each organization has the right leaders to meet mission requirements. One program that focuses on leader

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[29] Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy*, 6.

development and talent management is Project Warrior.[30] Project Warrior identifies

senior captains with exceptional tactical and technical skills and employs them at Combat

Training Centers (CTC) as Observer/Controllers. This builds their technical and tactical

foundation for their follow-on assignment to instruct at their respective branch schools.

These experienced officers teach junior officers on the tactics and techniques learned

while at the CTC, thus passing on expertise and preparing junior captains for future

assignments. Identifying the right officer and accessing them to this program develops

the individual and builds the organization by teaching the next generation of leaders.

The means consists of the people, time, will, and funding to support the system.

The means focus on establishing long-term criteria. By defining criteria today, the Army

can project for tomorrow's leaders and build the capability needed to adequately develop

and manage their careers.

Civilian Theory (Human Capital Model)

TM in the civilian workforce is changing rapidly. Dr. Bradley W. Hall has

developed a system designed to create sustained competitive advantage through people.[31]

His work is at the forefront of innovative HR implementation. Today, the employee-

employer relationship dynamics incorporate negotiation in order to meet the demands of

both parties. Companies cannot adhere to the up-and-out model as employees know that

they can take their talents elsewhere to meet the demands of the fast-paced workplace.

Talented individuals know their worth. The workplace now focuses on the work tasks,

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[30] Ibid., 8.

[31] Bradley W. Hall, PhD, *The New Human Capital Strategy* (New York: American Management Association, 2008), 3.

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not on rote job requirements. This leads to a TM system that relies on networking and flexibility to retain and employ the most talented individuals. Only through changing to meet the demands of the turbulent workplace can companies retain the talent that is in short supply.

Academic and management researchers have explored TM using a variety of models. One of the more prominent popular models to explore TM is called the Human Capital Theory (HCT). HCT represents a model for TM predicated on a systematic approach to growing human capital.

Older human resource models have proven insufficient. The primary reasons for failure are:[32]

1. No one is accountable for year-over-year human capital performance.

2. Focus on developing world-class systems, not world-class people.

3. Older HR models are misaligned to deliver business results.

Older models do not provide accountability for a company's most prized possession- its people, according to Hall.[33] Older models place employees in positions based on company need. There is little thought taken to personal interests, goals, etc. Employees are not evaluated according to a system that reviews, measures, and manages personnel according to a defined standard. Therefore, talent is not effectively managed to meet the needs of the company or the employees over the long-term. Older models focus on production as the measurement, not emphasizing how the processes are implemented to maximize employee efficiency. The problem is that long-term models have not

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[32] Ibid., 22.

[33] Ibid., 23.

changed to meet the demands of today's labor market. This is where the Human Capital Theory (HCT) diverges from the outdated HR models.

As opposed to existing models of HR which emphasize dated processes, HCT consists of three parts; (1) clearly describing what successful human capital is and how it connects to business results, (2) measuring and managing human capital with the same discipline as financial and physical capital, (3) enabling company managers to learn from experience to make progressively better human capital decisions.[34] Human Capital Management (HCM) is a system for improving the performance of senior HR managers.[35] Not every position within a company is necessary and HCM focuses on identifying those positions deemed critical and then measuring and managing those individuals filling those positions to ensure maximum employment of talents and skill-sets. HCM provides assessments and feedback which employee's value by using a finite system that removes a lot of ambiguity from the process. The end result occurs when employees are evaluated, incentivized, and held accountable in order to align employee goals with company objectives.

The shift to a new approach, HCS, addresses eight areas that previous models neglected. These eight areas are:

1. No clear, defined end-state.

2. Not clear on who is responsible for human capital excellence.

3. Focus that all roles are of equal value.

4. Older models are disconnected.

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[34] Ibid., 3.

[35] Ibid., 4.

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5. Older models are undisciplined and unmanaged.

6. Older models are internally focused.

7. Focus on programs rather than results.

8. Reactive systems.[36]

Hall provides evidence throughout *The New Human Capital Strategy* to support neglect in each of these eight areas. For example, Hall references a conversation between an HR VP and a General Manager where the use of a selection process is discussed. The General Manager was unaware that a selection process had been developed and the HR VP was unaware that the selection process was not being used. This is one example of how older HR models were disconnected, undisciplined, and unmanaged.[37]

HCM is a subset of human resources management (HR). HR develops systems to support all of the people-related activities in an organization. HCM is a system that allows businesses to focus on improving critical roles to meet objectives. The theory is that when critical roles outperform competitor peers, the business receives a competitive advantage. There are multiple theories in place today and businesses must clearly define and practice theory in order to effectively implement HCM. There are four critical components of HCM:

1. Effective executive teams

2. Leaders who deliver results

3. Key position excellence

4. Workforce performance

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[36] Hall, 9-11.

[37] Ibid., 35.

The roadmap of HCM consists of four distinct steps. The details within the roadmap can change based on the direction, size, location, make-up, mission of the user. The first step is to create capabilities to drive change. This step starts with building the executive team. This is the point where all direction, guidance, measures, and criteria are established for the organization. The executive team must be capable of providing clear, concise direction for the team. Putting those key leaders in the critical roles is vital during this step and the criteria for those roles must be clear. HCM states that having a top performing HR person within the organization is a critical role. Most organizations gloss over this position but in a system such as HCM where managing human (personnel) capital is the foundation, having a top performing HR person is crucial. The second step is to define success. Once all the critical roles are filled and the right people are filling the right positions, then the measures of performance and criteria for success can be determined. This is where HCM uses lagging indicators to define the human capital theory of the organization. Once the direction and goals have been defined, the next step is to create an improvement process. The need to develop current and grow future leaders is part of this step. Using the goals and performance measures, the leadership can then determine how to implement an improvement program to meet the stated goals. During this step critical roles carry significant priority as they must be continually evaluated and improved in order to maintain a competitive advantage. The improvement programs lead to employee development which ultimately lead to results and support the HCM theory.

<u>Current Army Talent Management Systems</u>

Given the experience of corporate TM, the Army has made some modifications to existing practices yet many TM goals remain unrealized due to current Army TM

systems and unfulfilled initiatives.[38] The Army's current systems and resource allocation struggle to continue to access, develop, retain, and employ the officer corps in a manner that supports the Army's TM endstate. Analysis of the current system will identify several key gaps that a fully systematic approach to human capital and TM can remedy.

<p style="text-align:center">Career Model Requirements</p>

The officer career progression model transitions from Professional Military Education (PME) to Key Developmental (KD) assignment, a slight opportunity for broadening, then promotion and back to PME. This cycle plays out at the Lieutenant, Captain, and Major levels as officers attend the Officer Basic Course (OBC), Captains Career Course (CCC), and Command and General Staff College (CGSC) prior to moving out to their units to take over a KD assignment. In this model, officers must balance three key factors; PME, KD assignment, and time. The current model provides little control to the officer over any of these factors. Officers receive orders to attend PME within a certain timeframe, dictated by the Army. Once at PME, the officer then receives orders to their unit for KD and other various assignments depending on the unit strength. Again, the officer has very little say-so, especially at the company grade-level, in the current model. Once the officer is KD-complete, they receive orders again to fill an assignment that ideally capitalizes on the officer's skills and knowledge. These assignments are considered post-KD assignments and depending on the officer's timeline, can offer as little as one year of opportunity prior to moving on to the next phase of PME and starting

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[38] Michael J. Colorusso, David S.Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused Upon Talent" (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, April 2009).

the cycle over again. The officer controls the interaction with their assignment officer and waits to find out what the Army deems the appropriate next assignment.

Assignment System Requirements

The career progression model is based on a timeline of twenty years. The percentage of officers remaining in service past the twenty-year mark drops significantly. Within this timeline, officers can progress from second lieutenant to lieutenant colonel in a phased, time and criteria-based model. The initial promotion within the lieutenant ranks is based on time in service. Promotion rates typically fall in the 98 percent range or higher. Promotion from first lieutenant to captain again is primarily based on time in service and remains at a rate between 88-93 percent, depending on the year group. At this point, promotions are based on time in service but additionally there are requirements to hold KD positions and conduct PME. These KD positions vary based on branch, but Company Commander and Primary Staff Officer are the typical positions held at the rank of captain as a prerequisite of promotion to major. The major-level also is based on time in service and a KD position. The positions held at this level become slightly more diverse but typically the Battalion Operations Officer (S3) or Executive Officer are the positions identified as KD.[39] The KD positions for lieutenant colonel are centered on Battalion Command and/or Primary Staff Officer, again depending on branch. Once an officer reaches their time for eligibility of promotion to colonel, they have reached or past the twenty-year mark.

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[39] Department of the Army, DA Pamplet 600-3.

Officers achieve the prerequisites of DA PAM 600-3 by moving from assignment to PME and back to assignment throughout their career. When an officer comes into their window for re-assignment they work primarily through their branch manager at Human Resources Command (HRC). The branch manager compiles a list of assignments based on the needs of the Army and prioritized by the Army Manning Guidance. This list of assignments is then sent out to all officers within that branch that are eligible to move via a Permanent Change of Station (PCS). The officers prioritize the list based on their personal goals, objectives, and desires, and send that to the Branch Manager to compile.

This is the point in the assignment process where TM becomes applicable. Branch managers look at the list of assignments and officers and attempt to place each officer in the best position which aligns with their preferences. Using regulations, unit preferences, and officer history, the branch manager slates each officer. There are multiple factors which affect officer assignment. Branch managers must adhere to regulations for Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and Dual-Military couples. Units provide input as to which officers they want and if the officer and unit match, the branch manager takes that into account. Army guidance calls for well-rounded officers so branch managers attempt to cross-level experiences for officers. Infantry officers for example, can be assigned to different types of infantry units and branch managers attempt to vary assignments to ensure officers are exposed to each. At this point, the branch manager has complete control of the assignment, and it is up to their discretion where the officer goes. Implementing a strategy that builds off of the criteria described above and incorporating officers talents and employing them in the most effective manner supports TM.

Army TM Initiatives Model

The Army plans to capitalize on TM by focusing on four areas–Access, Develop, Retain, and Employ. The Strategic Studies Institute completed a multi-part monograph called "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused upon Talent." This Army Officer Human Capital Model (AOHCM) focuses upon officer talent for a force that must be adaptable to changing internal and external labor markets, and in the context of an all-volunteer force.[40] The model utilizes a framework for defining officer talent through the process of "screening, vetting, and culling."

Screening is the first opportunity to determine talent and starts during the accession's phase of the model. Screening determines not only the quantity of officers, but using deliberate criteria, the quality of officers. Criteria are critical during the screening phase as this determines the start point for officer development. Proper screening leads to a higher quality officer corps specifically designed to meet mission requirements and produces officers more likely to extend careers due to job satisfaction and opportunity.

Vetting is the next phase in the framework. This allows the Army to validate and evaluate the officers to determine potential. Vetting provides the first real insight into each employee's potential for retention, development, and advancement[41] Vetting is the means of prioritization and categorization to support the requirements of the force. Proper

[40] Colorusso, Lyle, and Wardynski, "A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused Upon Talent," 20.

[41] Ibid., 21.

vetting provides an accurate picture of talents, skill-sets, and potential to determine the best position for each officer within the corps.

Culling is the method by which the Army can evaluate vetting and reward high-performing, high-talented officers, and re-train or release low-performing officers. Culling allows the Army to determine where to make cuts and ensure the most talented officers are retained. Culling seeks to eliminate the lower levels of talent and raise the quality of the force.

Throughout the model, the process of screening, vetting, and culling continues at each grade. By this process, the model proposes to raise the talent distribution and level. Professional sports use this method as they screen future players, vet players during off-season and pre-season, and then cut those not as talented in order to produce the highest-quality team during the regular season. The AOHCM must continually exercise this process as lateral entry is not feasible, and must make each phase distinct in order to properly field the best team.

<u>Accessing Talent</u>

The Army Strategy states that the ability to bring in new talent is critical in any enterprise. According to AOHCM, accessions must focus its efforts on screening, vetting, and culling specific areas of expertise to identify and recruit talented people.[42] The current methods for accessions operate across varying standards resulting in a mix-match of qualities and talents that do not necessarily result in appropriate levels of talent at the

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[42] Ibid., 16.

initial stage of entry into the force.[43] This in turn requires additional training and cost to develop officers. This condition potentially forces the Army to retain lower quality officers or slowing down the progression of higher potential candidates; hence, reducing the quality of talented officers across the force.

Acknowledging this shortcoming, AOHCM calls for the establishment of definitive accessions criteria applicable to all candidates. By accessing officers along the same standards, the quality of the officer corps rises. This is a point of contention within AOHCM as TM principles look for diverse talents across the talent pool. However, higher levels of talent at the entry level translate to higher levels of talent distribution throughout the career life-cycle. Identifying and obtaining higher levels of talent during accessions, the Army can increase its talent pool.

<div align="center">Developing Talent</div>

Development takes place throughout an officer's career. In AOHCM, development takes place primarily via additional civilian education, training with industry, professional military education, mentorship, and operational assignments.[44] Development stretches across education and training. Additionally, AOHCM stresses the necessity to balance between generalist and specialist perspectives. TM takes place by distributing talent both between and across career fields. Development requires additional refinement as the generalist requirements remain largely undefined.

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[43] Ibid., 17.

[44] Michale J. Colorusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Developing Talent" vol. 5 (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, March 2010), 26.

Retaining Talent

Retention for the Army provides the most TM opportunity in AOHCM. Officers face rising opportunity costs elsewhere and the Army has limited mechanisms to counter the issue. The Army struggles to match private enterprise salary and compensation, but other avenues are available to incentivize officers to remain in the force. When Army career expectations go unfulfilled, talented officers potentially reach out to the private sector for fulfillment. The Army has begun implementing incentive programs such as branch of choice, guaranteed advanced educational opportunities, and enhanced military education opportunities as a means of retention. AOHCM calls for the alignment of honing incentive opportunities with individual desires. By increasing incentive opportunities, the Army can retain talented officers. Aligning occupation, assignment, and educational opportunities with individual officers, the Army links TM with opportunity and potentially retains more talent.

Employing Talent

Effectively employing talent completes the TM cycle as it uses Accession, Retention, and Developing to assign talent appropriately. Employing talent is the most difficult aspect of TM for the Army as the current systems struggle to fully meet TM objectives. Employment in the antiquated assignment process does not always maximize TM requirements. TM is not as deeply embedded into HR systems as required. Personnel managers use the ORB and OERs as the primary ways to determine what they "think" is a good match for both individual officer and unit. Additionally, the policy of fairness and equity is still in practice today. In AOHCM this policy goes away in favor of a flexible policy of assigning officers based on requirements and talents.

Another issue with employing talent is there are limited databases that track information on talent and skills for officers. AOHCM calls for the creation of a database where officers can communicate skills, traits, experiences, and other relevant information.[45] The system would require definitive criteria to match skills and talents with opportunities. The "Greenpages" initiative is expected to come online in 2018 and is a principal step toward affecting change. This program allows officers to market themselves to units and then allows units to "select" the right individual to fill a need. Comparable to the job search website Monster.com, this system is a critical step in establishing an effective TM database.

Greenpages was initiated as a pilot program in 2011 and was reasonably successful in fulfilling officer and unit desires. Officers who participated went well beyond job experience in their on-line resume. There were options for including personal information, family information, traits, hobbies, interests, and goals. Units were able to review each candidate and match the best candidate for the advertised assignment. Branch managers facilitated the transaction between units and officers. The branch manager became a broker in the process–linking units and officers, vice the current system where the branch manager is the dealer–giving officers to units. This pilot program was the first time that officers and units looked at assignments in a labor market context–matching talent to military organization. The Army culture, specifically at HRC, was not culturally prepared to fully implement Greenpages to the force. In spite of institutional resistance, officer, senior leader, and commander assessments were so

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[45] Michale J.Colorusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Employing Talent" vol. 6 (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, May 2010), 34.

positive the Army recommissioned the program and plans to implement it as a critical step towards developing Army-wide TM practices.

The full realization of TM will require considerable change to the Army's culture and HR systems. This thesis looks at the history of TM from post-World War I to today, seeking to identify gaps in meeting requirements. Analyzing current TM theories and models helps to understand these gaps. Reviewing civilian theories provides potential solutions the Army can adopt to support future TM. Given the background and literature identified in this chapter, the next chapter focuses on outlining a research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> The person born with a talent they are meant to use will find their greatest
> happiness in using it.
>
> ― Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Talent Management; the phrase sparks many responses across today's force. Whether at a conference for senior leaders, at sergeant's time training, or reading this thesis, the ideas and perceptions of talent management (TM) vary in the ranks. The lack of consensus illustrates confusion on the definition of TM itself and the systems that implement and evaluate TM. This lack of clarity originates at the Army-level and extends down through the force. As a result, a series of uncoordinated systems struggle to generate outcomes desired by senior leaders–particularly the development of officers who thrive in volatile and ambiguous environments. For effective TM, the Army needs to clearly define requirements to place the right officer in the right assignment at the right time.

Today's austere environment creates a challenge to assess, develop, and retain those officers with the skill-set to lead tomorrow's force. Quantitative analysis shows that accession of officers has changed remarkably since before 9/11 due to a multitude of facts ranging from generational shifts to societal beliefs.[46] These shifts have left the Army with potential challenging in recruiting those individuals with the desired traits of an officer. Accessions must adapt to meet the requirements of tomorrow. Further

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[46] Colorusso, Lyle, and Wardynski, "A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused Upon Talent," 11.

complicating the topic of TM, retention data shows a shift in the later years of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns that leaves a gap as officers decided to take their talents elsewhere.[47]

To effectively analyze Army TM systems historical data is critical to understanding shortfalls. Once historical context is understood current systems can be reviewed and compared with the requirements put forth by senior leaders. The outcome of the analysis of today's systems is highly qualitative as the human dimension and TM systems remain largely ambiguous. The prevailing uses of TM in the private sector must be analyzed and understood in order to determine differences with the Army's practices. Once each of these areas have been studied the quantitative and qualitative data will assist in determining any areas the Army can improve in regards to TM.

The area of talent management is broad, covering a multitude of subjects. To adequately cover each aspect of TM is not feasible in one study. There are four main areas of TM as suggested by the *Strategic Studies Institute's* monograph on TM; Accession, Development, Retention, and Employment. Accession and Retention data is not readily accessible; therefore, this study will focus primarily on the Development and Employment aspects of the proposed TM construct. As a means of addressing a portion of TM in a meaningful way, this monograph will focus on providing insight and understanding of the current systems, identifying gaps in these systems, and then determining if there are areas the Army can address.

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[47] Ibid., 19.

History of HR – Post WWI to Present (Ch 2)

Necessity of Change!!!

Talent Management Theory

Accession   Development   Retention   Employment

Definitions/
Requirements
(Ch 2)

Gaps
(Ch 4)

Potential
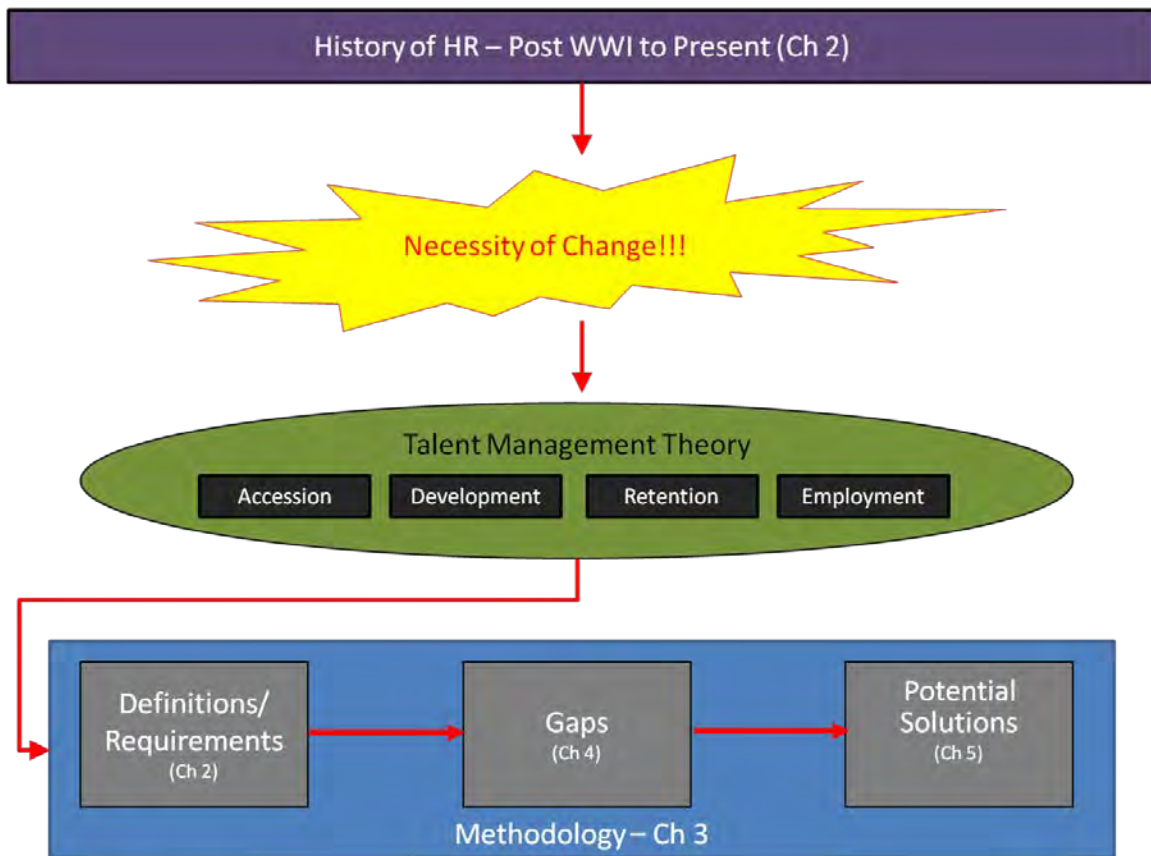Solutions
(Ch 5)

Methodology – Ch 3

Figure 3.   Methodology

Source: Created by author.

The intent is to provide insight and understanding of the current systems, identify gaps in these systems, and then determine if there are any potential areas the Army can address.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

This chapter will focus on identified gaps within certain areas of TM. These gaps

are critical as the talent pool shrinks, yet the demand for qualified officer remains high.

Addressing these factors will drive the development of TM systems to focus on

individuals and accurately defining the attributes and competencies needed based on

aptitude, performance, and potential.[48] The initial gap is the ambiguity of Army TM

requirements and definitions. The next gap is a poor quantification of TM requirements

within the existing evaluation system. The mis-application of TM across multiple career

fields is the third gap. The final gap is the inflexible "up-or-out" system that restricts TM

by placing officers in a career timeline predicated on meeting gates rather than focusing

on individual talents and potential.

Gap 1: Talent Management Requirements and Definitions

TM guidance given by Army senior leaders provides a framework for

expectations; however, TM practices remain tied to legacy HR models. This section will

identify TM requirements outlined by Army senior leaders. TM definitions will also be

discussed as will the confusion between guidance, requirements, and definitions in the

current TM construct. Finally, this section will discuss the current assignment systems to

provide understanding of the gaps.

The basic requirement of Army TM practices is to develop and put to best use

leaders based on their talents derived from operational, educational, and institutional

[48] Colorusso, Lyle, and Wardynski, "Employing Talent," 18.

experiences as well as personal traits, characteristics, interests, and proclivities in specific areas. This has been described euphemistically as "the right officer, in the right assignment, at the right time." Army Chief of Staff (CSA) General Odierno recently stated "We have to continue to develop these Soldiers as we move forward. We have to optimize performance; we have to optimize our management of our talent. To me, that's number one by far."[49] This characterization exhibits the priority senior leaders place on TM. The Combined Arms Center (CAC) recently published the *Army Leader Development Strategy* that states, in the introduction, "Leader development is fundamental to our Army . . . talent management complements leader development."[50] Defined as "Precision Talent Management," the Army proposed approach includes comprehensive assessments, predictive analytics, and customizable education options to attempt to optimize the strengths of each individual in the force-pool.[51] This definition, implemented through the ends-ways-means construct, results in the Leader Development Model, Figure 1.[52]

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[49] William Eliason. "An Interview with Raymond T. Odierno," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 75 (4th QTR 2014): 6.

[50] Department of the Army, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, *The Human Dimension White Paper* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combined Arms Center, 2013), 3.
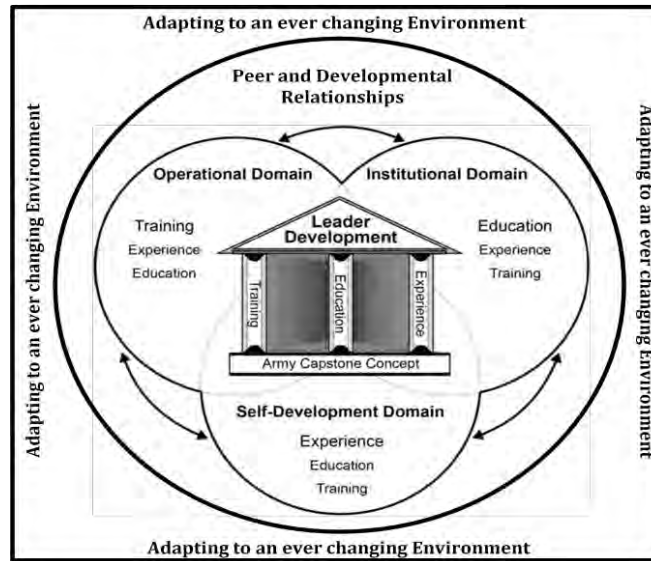
[51] Ibid., 21.

[52] Ibid., 8.

Figure 4.   Leader Development Model,

Source: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Combined Army's Center, *The Human Dimension White Paper* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combined Arms Center, 2013), 3.

This model incorporates three basic domains (operational, institutional, and self-development) to achieve its end-state of a fully developed officer. Through these domains, TM is used to distribute officers based on their skills, knowledge and behaviors.

ALDS also identifies the requirement that officers must be living examples of "Be, Know, and Do."[53] Further outlining TM requirements, the ALDS states leaders must possess and demonstrate traits such as "adaptable, agile, flexible, responsive, and resilient."[54] Army senior leaders expect that officers will master fundamentals as a professional obligation; however, looking at specific statements, there is no

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[53] Ibid., 4.

[54] Ibid., 5.

accompanying definition or criteria to express how senior leader's goals are incorporated into TM.

The first identified gap in TM is defining what certain words mean in relation to TM. Talent, as defined by OEMA and used by senior leaders, is the unique intersection of skills, knowledge, and behaviors in every person. The definition further explains that talent goes beyond training, education, and experiences provided by the Army and incorporates "fullness of life." Fullness of life includes personal experiences, ethnographic and demographic background, hobbies, travel, and personality, learning style, education, preferences and a "myriad number of other factors."[55] Here, in the initial definition, the Army presents a problematic issue. By using a myriad of words, the Army never really scopes the definition. In order to fully realize TM, each factor must be identified and criteria defined to measure officers' capabilities. Without attaching the criteria and measurement, subjectivity is applied and limits TM success. *ALDS* describes a framework consisting of three Lines of Effort (LOE) to apply to leader development, which ties to TM. The LOEs consist of the three domains shown previously in the Leader Development Model and are presented in figure 2.[56]

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[55] U.S. Army Talent Management, "Homepage," accessed 2 May 2015, www.talent.army.mil.

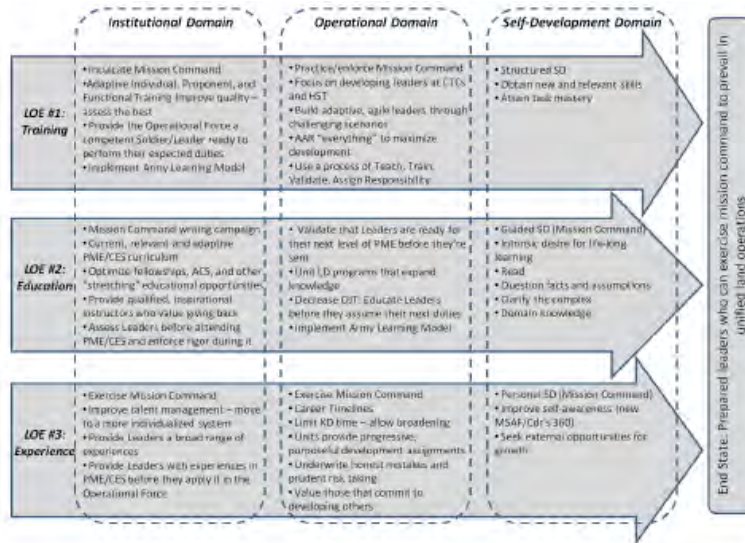[56] Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy*, 10.

Figure 5.   Lines of Effort

Source: U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, October 2013), 10.

Each LOE provides guidance across each domain leading to the desired end-state, but struggles to provide mechanisms to measure effectiveness. Without establishing a baseline for each individual, the Army struggles to support TM objectives by substituting subjective assessments vice objective analysis.
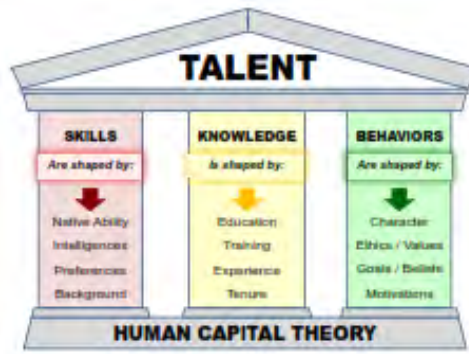
Figure 6.   Talent Foundations

Source: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Combined Army's Center, "The Human Dimension," White Paper, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 3.

The Army has developed a construct for talent based on three "pillars"–Skills, Knowledge, and Behaviors.[57] Skill is defined in the dictionary as "the ability, coming from one's knowledge, practice, aptitude, etc., to do something well."[58] In the Army TM construct, skills are shaped by native ability, intelligence, preferences, and background. Knowledge is defined as "acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles, as from study or investigation."[59] Knowledge is shaped by education, training, experience, and tenure. Behaviors are defined as "manner of behaving or acting,"[60] and are shaped by character, ethics/values, goals/beliefs, and motivations. These building blocks are incorporated into TM as the basis for defining talent. Apart from the above graphic, there is no other

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Dictionary.com, "Skill," accessed 15 March 2015, www.dictionary.com.

[59] Dictionary.com, "Knowledge," accessed 15 March 2015, www.dictionary.com.

[60] Dictionary.com, "Behaviors," accessed 15 March 2015, www.dictionary.com.

explanation or baseline to measure these blocks, especially when comparing similar officers.

There are other key terms used to express desired traits in TM. ALDS states that leaders must be "Adaptable, agile, flexible, responsive, and resilient."[61] Each of these terms is repeated throughout Army TM documents, white papers, and regulations. The OER allows Raters and Senior Raters to write narratives to describe these terms, but again, subjectivity and writing technique limit TM by not adhering to a baseline standard. Unfortunately, there are no established measurements to apply performance or potential to these terms. For example, adaptable is defined as being able to adapt oneself to different circumstances. The ability to adapt is critical in the military profession, but using adaptability in TM crosses multiple fronts. Mental adaptability varies from physical adaptability and emotional adaptability. Currently there is no distinction or prioritization between the types; hence, comparisons between officers is highly subjective and completely reliant on personal experience with the officers.

Another example that requires further definition is agile. Defined as quick and well-coordinated in movement, this definition again crosses the physical and mental fronts without distinction in TM. Defining mental agility though requires some sort of narrative or criteria to allow for measurement and application to TM. Each word used by senior leaders must be defined appropriately and specific criteria developed to link TM to assessment. Establishing quantifiable methods to compare officers and link to TM does not presently exist-potentially leading to subjective analysis, lack of comparability between officers, and confusion.

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[61] Ibid., 4.

Gap 2: Quantifiable Evaluation System

The system in place today to assess and evaluate officers throughout their career is the DA Form 67-10, the Officer Evaluation Report (OER). There are other products that provide feedback for self-development, such as the Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) program. While these other programs and products provide personal feedback, the Army HR system captures performance and potential almost exclusively through the OER.

TM calls for the distribution of officers based on their holistic skill-set. In order to properly implement TM practices, a system to capture the spectrum of required skills, knowledge, and behaviors must exist. The Army OER varies depending on rank. There are three different evaluation forms-one for company grade, one for field grade, and one for strategic leaders. The company and field grade forms are broken down into three parts; administrative information, performance evaluation, and potential evaluation. The last two sections are essentially an open narrative opportunity for raters to summarize performance and senior raters to forecast potential. Within the performance section the OER provides an opportunity for raters to openly comment on six officer comptenticies and attributles: character, presence, intellect, leads, develops, and achieves. There are multiple descriptions of each competency/attribute-as a result, subjective, open-eneded comments makes comparing officers difficult.[62] Additionally, none of the sections are defined as pertaining to TM.

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[62] U.S. Department of the Army, Department of the Army (DA) Pamplet 67-10, *Officer Evaluation Report* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, March 2014).

Additionally, TM is not specifically required in the potential section. This suggests that there is a gap between TM and the OER. Compounding the gap, HR managers and commanders have limited means to measure TM since there is no process for establishing a baseline for each officer (outside of senior rater enumeration of potential). Without a baseline to assess potential, the measurement is very subjective. TM requires the ability to assess and employ individuals to optimize their talents, but without criteria to measure, the Army cannot optimize talent employment since it can not judge each officer against a standard. Quantifiable assessments require a revised evaluation system that incorporates TM requirements to support the TM end-state

The inconsistent incorporation of TM quantification in OERs complicates the officer assignments process. Since there are limited means to assess talent, branch managers must rely on their personal assessments and insight to place officers in assignments; potentially missing opportunities to maximize TM holistically. The system is designed to identify a shortage in a unit and then identify an officer to fill that shortage. There are exceptions, but generally, the shortage requires nothing more than an officer of the appropriate rank and specialty. The cycle of "PME-unit for KD-broadening assignment-repeat" offers limited ability to adjust for officers. In order to address this issue, the OER system must mirror the adaptive goals stated by Army senior leaders.[63] Failure to adapt the OER and assignment system to nest TM principles and requirements

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[63] Michale J. Colorusso, David S.Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Talent: Implications for a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy" vol. 2 (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, November 2009), 20.

will exacerbate in the next gap–the mismanagement of talent across multiple career fields.

<div align="center">Gap 3: Talent Management Across Career Fields</div>

Another reason the Army struggles to implement TM effectively is due to the uniform treatment and management of career fields within the officer corps. There are multiple requirements that differ per branch and between the basic branches and functional areas. Basic branches generally follow the same career path with greater command and leadership opportunities. Functional areas have greater technical requirements with fewer command/leadership opportunities. Timeline and opportunity discrepancies increase the complexity of TM and the ability to reach the TM end-state.

Basic branches comprise the majority of officers within the officer corps and are the source from which the Army draws its senior leaders. One issue with TM in the basic branches is the ability to identify talented individuals using a single evaluation and assessment system. For example, officers executing the duties of the S4 are rated with the same system as a company commander, even though the skills required for each vary. This dilutes TM as officers abilities are compared across assignments without adjusting to focus on different aspects of talent required for each position. Additionally, basic branches have different definitions of success for different positions. For example, obtaining a second command is deemed success for Infantry and Armor officers; however, engineer officers do not typically take a second command but move on to assignments in the United States Army Corps of Engineers to diversify their talents. Both instances occur at the same time in the career timeline, the senior captain phase; however, TM is applied differently resulting in a potential disparity across the force on officer

employment. By having differing definitions of success, TM is then constrained as officers focus on branch specific requirements and sacrifice TM opportunities. Basic branch officers are also less likely to seek broadening assignments that support TM because leaving the traditional path may hurt promotion potential. This condition potentially creates an officer corps that avoids TM opportunities thereby reducing effective future employment.

FAs face issues with regard to TM, but the advantage FAs have over basic branches are the defined requirements for education, training, and promotion within each FA. FAs select those officers deemed eligible to meet the requirements outlined in DA 600-3 for each FA.[64] This ties into TM application as FAs focus on skills and knowledge to access, develop, retain, and employ officers. A significant shortfall for FA officers is the use of the same evaluation system that basic branches use. FA officers have specific requirements for education, promotion, and assignment that look different from basic branches. Evaluating FA officers using the same system fails to capture those specialized skills obtained and used within an FA. This negatively affects TM by not identifying officers according to the skill-sets required; furthermore, the lack of systematically capturing these skills inhibits the development of officers within FA requirements. Another issue facing FA officers is limited command/leadership opportunities. Expanded upon later in this chapter, FA officers are restricted in the current manning system as they progress in their careers. The General Officer Corps contains very few FA officers. This affects officers when considering applying to FAs and could deter some talented officers as their personal goals don't align with the limited opportunities.

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[64] U.S. Department of the Army, DA Pamplet 600-3, 25.

Finally, this gap also presents shortcomings when developing strategic leaders. One of the principles of TM is to identify talented officers to become future senior leaders. FA officers possess certain traits and expertise that are valuable at the strategic level; however, because of limited command opportunities, these officers are usually not promoted beyond colonel even though they typically serve in many strategic positions that would capitalize on their talent and skills. In addition to these issues, officers in both basic branches and FAs follow the same career timeline which presents further implications for effective TM practice.

The officer career timeline is currently structured around meeting specific requirements at certain times. Contrary to TM principles, officers who exhibit talents in certain areas or assignments are required to continue to meet an arbitrary timeline requirement versus capitalizing on their skills. The basic premise for the rigid career timeline is to keep officers moving in their career path and to make room for the next generation of leaders. TM principles run counter to the current career timeline requirement by focusing on identifying officers and employing them in the appropriate position. There is no prerequisite in TM to move individuals within a timeframe. Time is one of many factors in TM as experience and knowledge develop differently in each individual and therefore cultivating that should take place regardless of time.

TM success is also potentially limited at the outset of the officer career timeline as the Army accesses more officers than there are positions available. Officers have limited opportunities as the balance between officer volume and timeline typically reduces time in assignments at the lieutenant rank. This impacts officers as they progress to the captain rank when they must complete PME and their KD assignment prior to their promotion

board to Major, at a specific time. TM opportunities differ between branches based on volume of officers and time available. Additionally, TM opportunities fluctuate by unit depending on how many officers of each grade are assigned to each unit. This makes TM implementation difficult and ultimately impacts the Army's ability to meet its TM end-state.

Implementing a TM system that incorporates the multiple career fields in the Army to reach the end-state of "right officer, right assignment, and right time" has proven difficult. As identified earlier, changing the Army's culture in regard to TM and officer progression is just one hurdle. Defining the TM end-state that develops leaders and incorporates the entire officer corps requires a flexible system. *ALDS* provides a vision for leader development, utilizing TM as the system to identify and develop leaders.[65]
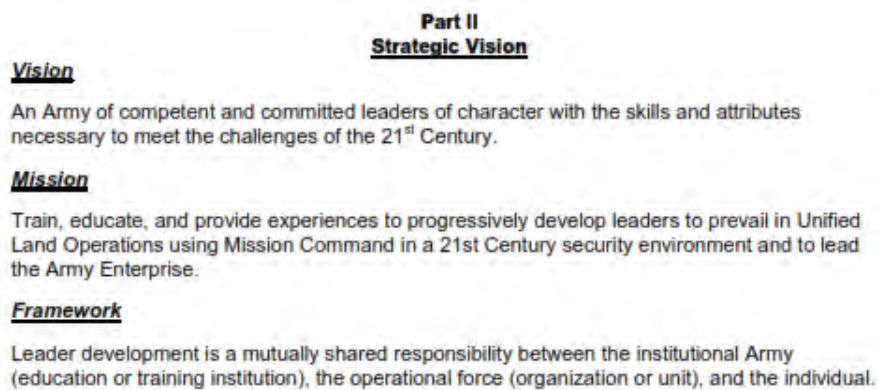
Part II
Strategic Vision

Vision

An Army of competent and committed leaders of character with the skills and attributes necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Mission

Train, educate, and provide experiences to progressively develop leaders to prevail in Unified Land Operations using Mission Command in a 21st Century security environment and to lead the Army Enterprise.

Framework

Leader development is a mutually shared responsibility between the institutional Army (education or training institution), the operational force (organization or unit), and the individual.

Figure 7.   Leader Development Strategic Vision

Source: U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, October 2013), 6.

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[65] U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leader Development Strategy*, 6.

This vision focuses on leader development, but there are implications for TM embedded in the construct. Creating leaders that embody the vision stated in *ALDS* can only be done through a TM system that ties into this vision. Attaining this vision requires defining the TM end-state and implementing systems that standardize criteria to assess officers. The private sector suffered from failure to achieve their end-state with old HR models. Using HCM, many companies now have definitive goals and assess results as the manner of determining success, something the Army is still trying to implement. The current issues with TM in both basic branches and FAs can be addressed by revisiting the mechanisms that support TM, specifically the "up-or-out" system of promotion.

<u>Gap 4: Up-Or-Out Promotions</u>

As stated above, the career timeline for an officer is predicated on satisfying requirements within a specific timeframe. Officers must meet the requirements and exhibit potential for service at the next grade in order to be promoted. This follows the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act which outlines career timeline/promotion requirements as dictated by Congress. Officers failing to meet the time requirement, regardless of potential, are nearly always separated from service. This inflexibility impacts TM as the skill-set of officers are neglected in favor of a time-constrained model. Low-performing officers are eliminated from further service due to performance, not time or educational requirements. TM theory acknowledges that organizations have personnel that just do not perform, and those individuals are usually separated. The issue with a system based on a rigid timeline is that the focus is on the timeline not developing the talent pool or finding the right fit at the right time for the right job. This system tends to prevent maximizing leader development as time requirements supersede opportunity.

Currently, there is no integrated TM database linked to the promotion system. Without a database, individuals are restricted to following the traditional career path. One symptom of TM failure in the current promotion system is the persistent gap in mid-career officers. Mid-career officers are the heart and soul of the professional officer corps, they lead, coach, and mentor junior leaders and they are the feedstock for future general officers.[66] The officer corps has a persistent shortfall in the amount of mid-career officers required to meet Army manning requirements.[67] The area where this is most concerning is at the end of initial service obligation. This leads to a shortage as these junior officers progress in their career. At this point officers have the greatest range of employment but haven't invested so much time that they cannot exercise their options. This is evidenced by the mass exodus of West Point and four-year ROTC Scholarship graduates after their initial commitment has ended.[68] The shortages do not realign with requirements until the lieutenant colonel timeframe at approximately 17 years of service as seen in Figure 8. This means that from approximately year 8 of the officer career timeline, a cohort year group will be unable to fill all of the assignments in the Army for approximately the next decade.

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[66] Colorusso, Lyle, and Wardynski "Talent: Implications for a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy," 3.
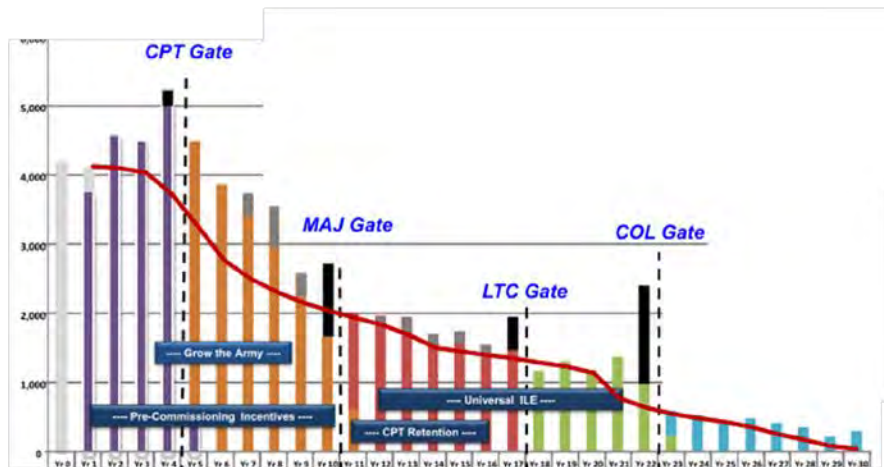
[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 5.

Figure 8.   Officer Requirements versus Availability

Source: Engineer Branch, "Branch Brief," accessed 2 May 2015, www.hrc.army.mil.

The Army, instead of addressing the root cause of retention rates at the end of initial commitment, has over-accessed new officers in an attempt to mitigate the forecasted losses. By accessing excess lieutenants, the Army has inadvertently magnified the problem. Now, instead of having five lieutenants waiting for coveted platoon leader positions, a battalion could have 10 or more. This leads to poor job satisfaction as these junior officers are filling jobs that have been created as a place-holder until they can move into a platoon leader position. Additionally, by over-accessing junior officers, the Army has diluted the talent pool by taking on additional personnel without a mechanism to measure and employ talent.

Contrary to an up-or-out promotion system, leader development takes time and opportunity. *ALDS* expands on the requirement to allow officers time and opportunity to maximize their talents and grow skill-sets. The up-or-out system restricts time and

thereby restricts or eliminates opportunity. In TM, time is only one of many factors. Officers develop at their own pace, and successful TM requires allowing time for development. Civilian education, for example, takes a specific amount of time. Officers pursuing a graduate level degree can expect to take two years to graduate. The skills and expertise obtained by studying a specific area support TM and can be employed to support the Army mission, if time is granted. The up-or-out system provides some room for opportunities, but if the timeline doesn't match, then the officer must forego the opportunity or face elimination from service. The Army will not be able to reach its TM goals if this continues. Officers, specifically those that provide a unique skill-set, should in accordance with TM principles be afforded the opportunity to develop themselves. Once the officer is ready, then employ the officer in a manner to optimize their skills. This is part of the private sectors' transition to HCM-provide opportunity, then use it to better the organization. The inclusion of females in previously closed combat arms specialties also provides opportunity. This increases the talent available for assignments and heightens skills across the force. TM is vital to developing tomorrow's leaders and should support, not hinder, the Army reaching that end-state.

The focus of this chapter has been on identifying gaps within the current Army officer career model. Understanding the gaps within the TM framework allows the Army to develop solutions to bridge the gaps. The next chapter will explore potential solutions for the identified gaps to develop a holistic TM system that optimizes human capital and develops leaders capable of executing the Army mission.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The focus of this chapter is to provide recommendations for the identified gaps from the previous chapters. TM requires a rethinking of Army practices in order to become embedded in organizational and institutional culture. Current Army practices are rooted in industrial-era systems that struggle to incorporate senior leader requirements. Senior leaders have publicly stated a desire to build a TM system that identifies and cultivates talent by Assessing, Retaining, Developing, and Employing the right officer in the right assignment at the right time. This goal is tied to studies done within the military and the private sector. Further defining the requirements and binding them to an evaluation system that allows for flexibility would complement the rhetoric and support Army TM principles. Recommendations for each of the four identified gaps will be presented as a method to achieve senior leader's requirements.

Recommendations

The first TM gap addressed is the ill-defined definitions and requirements in the TM system. Army senior leaders have identified quite a few traits, characteristics, and attributes that support TM. There is little linkage between stated TM requirements and how TM specifically support officer OPMS. The Army needs to define specific traits, characteristics, and values and then link them to TM. Specifically, the Army needs to express how each supports TM at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The typical framework for this is a DA PAM or Army Regulation. By tying each definition

and requirement into the TM framework, the Army can begin to apply them to officer development and career progression. Creating or modifying an Army regulation incorporating all definitions, requirements, and TM principles is the first step to developing a holistic TM system. Then next step is tying that into the evaluation system.

The OER does not fully incorporate TM principles. A quantifiable evaluation system that incorporates performance and potential with TM principles and definitions would better support TM. The envisioned evaluation system would incorporate TM in order to achieve unity of effort during application. This would provide a more complete understanding of an officer's potential as the focus shifts from evaluating potential within a rigid timeline to understanding the strengths of each officer and recommending options for career progression to master those strengths. The criteria within a refined evaluation system must be measurable, assessable, and recordable in a format that captures the officer's performance and potential as it applies to TM principles and definitions.

The current evaluation system struggles in this regard to meet senior leaders TM goals. Establishing evaluation criteria with concrete measurements creates a system that compares each individual officer to a standard, not to other officers. This allows for a better assessment system and also provides the opportunity to record growth throughout an officer's career, something the current system does not capture. Finally, implementing a more holistic evaluation system would allow for a restructuring of the assignment system to incorporate TM as the primary metric, not the evaluation itself. The evaluation becomes the device that captures the data which then feeds a TM database by reviewing the data and applying officers against assignments that call for specific skills, traits, and

experience. TM would shape assignments rather than the current system which treats all officers as interchangeable. The next step is to refine TM across multiple specialties.

By focusing on TM principles and developed TM criteria, HR managers will evaluate differing specialties with a baseline approach. Flexibility is limited in the current evaluation system to look at criteria based on specific branches or functional areas. Understanding branch requirements and tying them into TM will allow for the evaluation system to identify officers within each branch rather than looking at all officers through one lens. Going with a baseline, the Army can determine what is critical within TM parameters for each branch. Officers that achieve these critical traits, skills, etc., can then be rewarded and developed along the lines of their branch requirements versus the Army's current incentive/promotion system. This would provide opportunities for officers but also would develop the most talented officers with the skill-set required by TM and leader development principles.

Restructuring of the career timeline would be required in this new system. No longer would officers be tied to meeting gates within the same rigid framework. Rather, officers that show potential within the refined evaluation system could move within the Army to match their skills with the position. This could mean faster promotion for some while others take longer; however, this gives the Army an opportunity to incentivize talented officers to remain in the service. Conversely, if specific conditions require time, then officers could move within the requirements of that branch differently to ensure the expertise is gained prior to moving on. Focusing less on developing officers within a timeline and instead developing officers along TM principles and defined criteria creates a higher quality officer corps that incentivizes officers to focus on self-development.

The final recommendation is to refine the up-or-out system that follows the rigid career progression model. *HCM* provides ample proof that promoting based on skills and requirements increases an organizations' TM and productivity as well as incentivizes employees. There are several models that the Army can implement but the foundation for the career progression model should be on placing officers in positions that build within the TM framework. One method could be to allow Division Commanders to serve as the primary "hiring agency" for their organization. The Division Commander and his executive team (Command Sergeant Major, Chief of Staff, Deputy Commanding Generals, other as required) would announce assignment opportunities. Officers throughout the Army could apply for the positions they want to fill. The executive team would review and select those officers to fill assignments. Officers would fill the assignment for a pre-determined amount of time, but have the opportunity to petition to remain longer based on their preferences and needs of the Army. Conversely, if someone wants to apply for an S3 position as a Captain and are selected, they are moved ahead of others based on their talents and skills, not because they met an arbitrary timeline.

This system supports TM principles by allowing individuals to look for opportunities to develop themselves and apply their skill-sets; the executive team would review each applicant and select the best one for the position. It allows for movement laterally, as well as, vertically as officers are chosen to fill requirements based on talent and potential rather than by their rank and timeline. There are several options for refining the career progression model, but the bottom line is that TM principles do not support a rigid timeline. TM principles call for promotion and advancement based on skills, traits, experience, etc., that are required for the assignment. Until the Army transitions to this

type of progression model, the force will continue to underutilize talent-both the individual officer and the broader Army will suffer.

<center>Conclusion</center>

Army senior leaders continue to stress the importance of TM in developing leaders and increasing the quality of the officer corps. TM requirements stress the importance of leader development and identify traits, skills, and other desired characteristics that senior leaders believe are necessary for leaders. These requirements are still being developed and this results in gaps between requirements and practice. Given these gaps, this thesis explored how the Army can better manage the skills and talents of the officer corps to affect the future force. The ability to recognize shortfalls in the current HR system and adapt to achieve effective TM is critical in an environment where the Army is expected to do more with less. The Army loses talent, there is no argument against that; but by refining systems, can capitalize on retaining the "best" officers that might have taken their talents elsewhere. This study recommends focusing on establishing finite criteria within an evaluation system that is founded on TM principles. Building this framework will provide flexibility across the Army and allow cultivation of talented officers. Senior leaders have given guidance, now the Army's mechanisms for TM have to adapt to provide the output.

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